

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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UNCLAS SAN JOSE 1067

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, CS
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION TO PRIMARY ELECTIONS

REF: SAN JOSE 1037

1. MEDIA REACTION TO COSTA RICA'S FIRST-EVER PRIMARY ELECTION HAS EMPHASIZED THE HEALTHINESS AND VITALITY OF COSTA RICA'S TRADITIONALLY DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. EDITORIAL AND OTHER MEDIA COMMENTARY HAS BEEN EFFUSIVE AND SELF-CONGRATULATORY IN BOTH PRO-GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION PRESS. UNIVERSALLY PRAISED WAS THE DEMOCRATIC, PARTICIPATORY, FRAUD-FREE, VIOLENCE-FREE ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH THE CAMPAIGN AND VOTING WERE HELD, AND THE CIVIC-MINDED SPIRIT OF THE POPULACE. ALL PRAISED THE PRIMARY ELECTION SYSTEM--THE ONLY CRITICISM BEING THAT IT IS COSTLY.

SOME REPRESENTATIVE MEDIA COMMENTS:

--INDEPENDENT DAILY LA PRENSA LIBRE THANKED
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ALL-WINNERS, LOSERS, PUBLIC-FOR ENABLING
THE PRIMARIES TO BE CARRIED OUT IN A
TRANQUIL, ORDERLY MANNER.

--PRO-GOVERNMENT DAILY EXCELSIOR SALUTED THE
LOSING CANDIDATES' RESPECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS
TO THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC

PROCESS.

A--OPPOSITION DAILY LA NACION CALLED THE
PRIMARIES A CIVIC EXPERIENCE OF HONOR TO
THE CONTINENT, A REPUDIATION OF VIOLENT,
DICTATORIAL, OR UNFREE POLITICAL SOLUTIONS.

--OPPOSITION DAILY LA REPUBLICA NOTED THE
FAITH OF COSTA RICANS IN THEIR DEMOCRATIC
SYSTEM, RESPECT FOR DIFFERENT POLITICAL
VIEWS, AND THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF MEDIA IN
THE ELECTIONS.

2. PARTICULARLY LAUDED WAS THE WILLINGNESS OF THE FOUR
CANDIDATES AND THEIR SUPPORTERS, ESPECIALLY THE LOSERS,
TO ALLOW THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS TO FUNCTION SMOOTHLY
BY PLACING THEIR FAITH IN THE JUDGMENT OF THE VOTERS,
AND THEN ABIDING GRACIOUSLY BY THE RESULTS.

3. COMMENT: COSTA RICANS ARE BASKING IN THE COUNTRY'S
NUMBER ONE NATURAL RESOURCE--ITS DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM--AND
THEY ARE HONESTLY AND FERVENTLY PROUD OF THEIR PRIMARY
ELECTION PERFORMANCE. MEDIA COMMENTS ARE ECHOED BY
THE TICO-ON-THE-STREET FROM WHATEVER WALK OF LIFE.
THE CIVIC-FIESTA ATMOSPHERE OF MARCH 13, WITH FLAGS,
CONFETTI, CAR HONRS, PEOPLE WEARING PARTY COLORS,
AND HARD POLITICAL GRASSROOTS WORK AT GETTING OUT
THE VOTE, ARE CITED AS THE NATIONAL HALLMARK. COSTA
RICANS ARE PARTICULARLY PLEASED WITH SUNDAY'S RESULTS
BECAUSE THE PARTIES THEMSELVES ORGANIZED, CARRIED OUT,
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AND GUARANTEED THE ORDERLINESS OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.
THE ROLE OF THE CIVIL AND RURAL GUARDIN THE STREETS
NEAR THE POLLING PLACES WAS EXCLUSIVELY TO DIRECT
TRAFFIC.
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